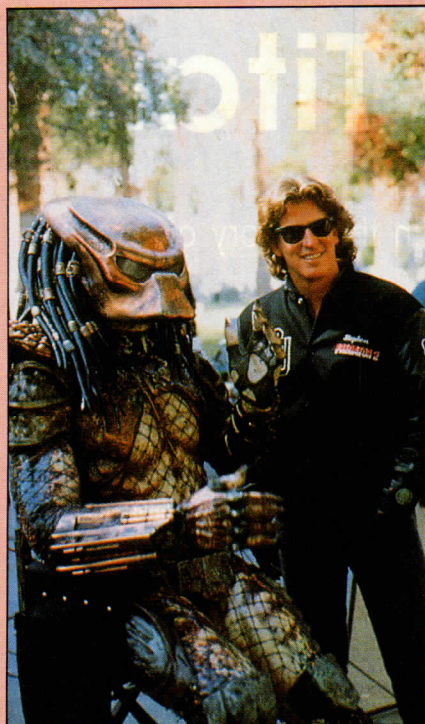


MOVIE IN THE MAKING



Before the vicious Predator from another planet landed once again on Earth for the sequel film *Predator 2*, rumours were flying around that this time the creature had brought along some of his mates, who were going to put in an appearance in the last reel (presumably to pave the way for *Predator 3*). But director Stephen Hopkins commented at the time, "We've already shot the ending and there's only one Predator in it."

If anything, the aim of the sequel for both director and writers, was to give the viewing audience a glimpse of what motivates this ruthless creature. Hopkins can even find some redeemable character traits in it. "He is quite honorable," he has insisted. "He's a mysterious, murderous creature, but he's also a creature who lives by his race's time-honored rules and traditions of the hunt. With this film, we get to see more of that side of him."

For the writers, sibling team Jim and John Thomas, the chance to create a sequel enabled them to explain the creature's motivations. They too have the same, almost positive view of Predator that Hopkins does.

"We had a wealth of background about the Predator that, for one reason or another, we weren't able to get into the first film," John Thomas said. "With the sequel, we've been able to tell all the back-story and basically catch up."

"For instance, we discover that the

Predators are a race of hunters and sportsmen who've been visiting this planet for 700 years. We're able to show his spacecraft for the first time and basically get down to the mechanics of what he does. We explain to the audience in no uncertain terms that the creature is not a psychopathic monster and that its motives and agenda are pure."

Jim Thomas agrees. "It's also obviously not the same creature. This one is more ambitious, which is why it chooses an urban setting for its hunt. We already know what the Predator looks like and what it will do so those elements of the story won't really surprise the audience."

"The trick for us in this one was to give the audience the expected in new and innovative ways. We've set you up with things you might expect to see but coming at you from a slightly different angle."

According to the Thomas brothers, *Predator 2* is "the Bible" from which any other future *Predator* movies

will spring. "This is the bible. We connect up all the pieces. There were things cut out of the first film that left people mystified as to what the film was really all about. *Predator 2* will clear all the questions up," commented Jim Thomas.

For both writers, *Predator 2* was almost simple in comparison to the first film. "Writing the sequel was much easier," commented Jim Thomas. "We had the story locked in and we knew all the elements. This script was written with a real sense of what the technical requirements would be; where, with the first film, we were more concerned with the myths, the grand scale and the image of the characters."

"Those elements were in this script as well, but our eye was definitely looking toward how we were going to pull these things off when we were writing it." John believes *Predator 2* is a lot cleaner and "...more pure. The second script is definitely more complex and multi-layered. The second one explains much more and it



PREDATOR 2



definitely contains a lot more action."

When *Predator* was written (under the name of *Hunter*) it originally was about a brotherhood of alien hunters who come to Earth and then separate. However, it became obvious that so many Predators only complicated the story.

Once the final script was finished, the pair then had the unenviable task of attempting to hunt down a production deal - something that finally happened by chance at Twentieth Century Fox. When action hero Arnold Schwarzenegger like the script it seemed that box office heaven was on its way. The brothers, however, were still worried.

"Arnold liked the script immediately," recalled Jim Thomas. "He was very interested in his character, and in those early meetings, that scared us a bit because we knew Arnold had a certain take on action roles that didn't necessarily coincide with what we had in mind.

"We told him that if he would just



play this guy straight, as a real person who is really afraid and concerned for the welfare of his men, that the audience would truly believe he was in great jeopardy. And that when he quite literally rises out of the mud, people would really perceive him as a true hero. Arnold played him that way in the film and I believe it's to his credit that the film worked as well as it did." That wasn't the only discussion point in the original *Predator*. The ending too was up in the air for some time.

"Whether or not Arnold and/or the Predator would actually die in the film was a major topic during script revisions," John revealed. "Even though the basic theme was of one man being pushed to his limits and ultimately surviving, we toyed with the idea of the Predator defeating Arnold but letting him go and vice versa. But it was decided somebody had to win and that you couldn't have a satisfactory Hollywood ending unless the monster gets it in the end." ☆

-Lyn Jones